

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology  
and Immunization Section**

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**Health Advisory – Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* O157 Infections, King County, 3 Sept. 2015**

**Action requested:**

- **Be aware of a recent increase in Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC) O157 infections in King County. Three cases have developed hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Many, but not all, recent cases have been associated with consumption of food from Los Chilangos, a food truck that serves food at local farmers markets and other locations.**
- **Consider STEC infection in all persons with bloody diarrhea and in persons with bloody or non-bloody diarrhea and a history of food from farmers markets or food trucks during the exposure period (usually 3-4 days but may be 1-10 days).**
- **In patients with symptoms compatible with STEC infection, collect a stool specimen and request *E. coli* testing by culture and Shiga toxin test.**
  - If bloody diarrhea is present, laboratory evaluation should include a complete blood count, serum electrolytes, BUN, and creatinine
  - Shiga toxin immunoassays should be obtained in addition to cultures, but should not replace culture on a sorbitol MacConkey agar plate
- **Report confirmed or suspected STEC cases immediately to Public Health at (206) 296-4774. Obtain the following history during the exposure period (1 to 10 days before symptom onset):**
  - Dietary history, travel history with travel dates and destinations, and history of animal exposures (pets, farms, etc.)

**Background**

Since mid-August, ten cases of *E. coli* O157 infection have been linked to consumption of food from Los Chilangos. Food from Los Chilangos was consumed at farmers markets, food trucks, or other locations. Four of the ten cases have been hospitalized, and two have developed HUS. An investigation is ongoing into a potentially contaminated product.

Other recent STEC cases, including a case who developed HUS, have not reported consumption of food from Los Chilangos during their exposure period. A common source has not been identified for these cases, and they do not appear to be linked at this time. The investigation is ongoing for these cases.

**Resources**

- Public Health STEC factsheet:  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/shigatoxin/English.aspx>
- CDC STEC and *E. coli* FAQ: <http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/general/index.html>